

The Relationship between Spiritual Well-Being and Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement among students. Among 18,465 statistical population, 320 people were selected by Morgan Table with the stratified random sampling method. This research method was descriptive correlational and spiritual well-being questionnaire was used by means of face validity and Cronbach's alpha reliability. The results showed that the mean of the spiritual well-being of the students is not satisfactory. There is a significant and positive relation between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of economics, management and humanities. But, there is no significant relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of engineering and basic sciences and art and architecture. On the other hand, a significant relationship was observed between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of economics and management, humanities, engineering, basic sciences and students of art and architecture.

Keywords: spiritual well-being, academic achievement, students, Shiraz

Introduction

Academic achievement is one of the most important indicators in educational assessment and educational system try to implement that. In other words, society is concerned about the destiny of the individual, his growth and successful development and his status in the society and expects individuals to be developed in various aspects including cognitive dimensions as well as personality, emotional and behavioral dimensions and obtaining abilities and skills (Farahani, 1994).

Spiritual well-being is a variable that is related to academic achievement. According to the conducted researches, the people who have a high sense of spiritual well-being are active in the academic achievement (Fritz, 1984).

Students constitute a large portion of the population of a country. In all countries, academic issues and a lot of problems of students have devoted a wide range to itself and it seems various factors threaten mental health. These factors can be a combination of internal stimuli such as personality which predispose area for individual's failure and surrender in front of problems or external factors such as environmental stress. Often excessive tension among students lead to the educational failure, unemployment, drug abuse and addiction, health problems, poor performance, dropout, and in some cases even lead to suicide and killing others. In facing with various stressors and reactions resulting from them, students usually try to use different ways of coping such as avoiding tension, seeking social support or turning to religion and conducting special religious rituals or negative coping strategies such as alcohol and drugs abuse. Fans of the role of spirituality in mental health and interpersonal compatibility attempts to establish a connection between health and spirituality as the spiritual well-being structures. Considering that the achievement and dropout rate is one of the educational efficiency criteria, discovering and examining variables affecting academic performance lead to better understanding and prediction of the variables affecting the school and the university (Farahani, 1994).

In the past few decades, the importance of spirituality and spiritual growth in human has increasingly attracted psychologists and mental health professionals' attention. Development of

psychology science on the one hand, and the dynamic and complex nature of modern societies, on the other hand, make the spiritual needs of human more important than the material needs.

One of the requirements in the field of anthropology is paying attention to the spiritual dimension of human from the perspective of scholars, especially the World Health Organization experts that currently define human a biological, psychological, social and spiritual creature. Another essential issue is the re-emergence of spiritual tension and seeking clearer understanding of the faith and its application in daily life. Nowadays, people tend to spirituality and spiritual matters more than ever. For this reason, the scientific study of spirituality is one of the important and common issues in the physical and mental health (Emmons, 2000). Researches have suggested that spirituality has positive association with physical and mental health. Fans of the role of spirituality in mental health improvement and interpersonal compatibility try to make relation between two concepts of health and spirituality as spiritual well-being (Hawks et al, 2003, p.31).

Spiritual well-being

Spiritual well-being is a state of health that reflects feelings, behaviors, positive recognitions towards the relationship with oneself, others, nature and superior creature. Spiritual well-being gives a unified identity, satisfaction, happiness, love, respect, positive attitude, inner peace and purpose and direction to individual in life (Gomez and Fisher, 2003).

Ellison (1983, as cited in Fisher, 2002) defines the spiritual well-being as the confirmation of individual's life in relationship with holy persons, self, society and the environment that nurtured in that. He believes that spiritual well-being is a religious component which indicates the association with a higher power, namely, holy persons. Existential well-being is psychological- social component and indicates individual feeling about who is this, what does he do and why and where does he belong. Since man acts as an integrated system, these two dimensions, while being separated, interact and overlap with each other, and as a result, a sense of spiritual health, satisfaction and purpose arise. Different research findings in countries with religious backgrounds indicate that in all cultures, religiousness has a positive impact on aligning with family and is associated with more satisfaction with life. This association in cultures that the role of religion is more highlighted is stronger compared with cultures that is less important (Sabatir et al., 2004). Some researchers believe that due to the religious beliefs, coping with emotions and social situations is easier (Dayner et al., 2003).

Thus, religion as an intermediate variable influences intellectual process and evaluation of everyday events of life, so that many apparently negative events are evaluated positive and the person will have positive feelings towards them (Vahed and Ghani Zadeh, 2009).

Analyzing the relationship between the spiritual meaning and spiritual well-being, mental happiness, life satisfaction, psychological prosperity, hope for the future and purpose in students' life showed that there is a significant and positive relation between the spiritual meaning and two subscale of spiritual well-being (spiritual belief and spiritual peace), subjective happiness, satisfaction of life, psychological prosperity, hope for the future and purpose in life and the most relationship of spiritual meaning is with the purpose in life of students. Also, the results of stepwise regression analysis suggests that in the first step, objectively in life, 38%, in the second step, by adding spiritual belief, 47%, in the third step, with the addition of spiritual comfort, 50%, in the fourth step, with entrance of psychological flourishing, 52% and finally by adding hope for future explain 53% of the variance of the spiritual meaning (Nadi and Sajadian, 2011).

A study that was conducted by Taheri and Goli Nezhad on evaluating religious orientation and mental health at Tehran University students indicated that female students with the religious beliefs have more mental health and happiness (as cited in Moutab, 2011). Yousefi and Mesbah (2006) investigated the relationship between religious attitude and happiness in adolescents and

reported that there is a weak but meaningful relationship between happiness and religious attitudes (as cited in Moutab, 2011).

Baron (2006) investigated the religious relationship with health, happiness and anxiety among 941 students from various schools in Kuwait and concluded that there is negative relationship between religiosity and anxiety and positive relationship between religiosity and mental-physical health and happiness.

The purpose of study

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between spiritual well-being of Islamic Azad University students of Shiraz and their academic achievement.

Methodology

The research methodology is a descriptive correlational with survey method and sample selection table of "Krejcie and Morgan" from given society is used in order to determine the sample size and among 18,465 students studying 320 students as a sample were selected through stratified random- sampling (Table 1).

Table 1. Statistical sample with respect to gender

Gender of student	Percentage	Population frequency	Sample frequency
Male	45	8230	144
Female	55	10235	176
Total	100	18465	320

Table 2. Statistical sample with respect to the field of study

Faculty	Percentage	Number of Students	Sample
Economics and Management	18	3474	58
Engineering & Technology	35	6450	112
Human Sciences	19	3545	61
Basic Sciences	8	1446	26
Art and Architecture	20	3550	157
320	100	18465	Total

Instruments of the study

The instruments used in the study were Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) questionnaire and the mean scores of students

Spiritual Well-Being Scale: The questionnaire is made by using the Ellison Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) among Tehran University students which consists of forty questions with five degrees Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire consists of four subscales as follows: relationship with the Supreme Being, relationship with oneself, relationship with nature, and relationship with others.

Results

In order to see whether there is any significant relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of Islamic Azad University students of Shiraz, based on gender, and field of study, Pearson's correlation coefficient and mean were used to analyze this question.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for spiritual well-being of students' academic achievement

Standard deviation	Mean score of spiritual well-being	SD	Mean scores of academic achievement	SD
Male students	112.63	8.36	15.86	3.56
Female Students	118.97	7.23	15.93	3.49

According to the above table, the mean score of female students' academic achievement is more than male students. Also, the mean score of female students' spiritual well-being is more than male students. But, totally the spiritual well-being score of male and female students is less than mean.

Table 4. Pearson's correlation coefficient rate between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students

Spiritual well-being and academic achievement Gender	Value of Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Male students	0/68	0/01
Female Students	0/64	0/05
Total	0/65	0/01

Based on the above Table, there is a significant and positive relation between spiritual well-being and students' academic achievement (male and female); this means that with increase or decrease of spiritual well-being, the level of academic achievement will increase or decrease, too.

Now, in order to see whether there is any significant relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of Islamic Azad University students of Shiraz, with respect to the field of study, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to analyze this question.

Table 5. Pearson's correlation coefficient rate between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students based on the field of study

Faculty	Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Economics and Management	0/61	0/04
Engineering & Technology	0/12	0/07
Human Sciences	0/64	0/05
Basic Sciences	0/21	0/10
Art and Architecture	0/09	0/08
Total	0/32	0/12

Table 5 indicates that generally there is no significant and positive relationship between spiritual well-being and students' academic achievement (by field of study) ($r = 0/32$ and $p < 0/12$). But among the academic disciplines, there is a significant and positive relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of economics and management ($r = 0/61$ and $p < 0/04$) and students of Human Sciences ($r = 0/64$ and $p < 0/05$), but any significant relationship was not found between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of Engineering ($r = 0/12$ and $p < 0/07$) and basic sciences students ($r = 0/21$ and $p < 0/10$) and students of art and architecture ($r = 0/09$ and $p < 0/08$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The results showed that the spiritual well-being mean of the students in the dimensions of communication with the Supreme Being, communication with self and connection with nature is not satisfactory, and only in the dimension of communication with others is desirable. Totally, the spiritual well-being mean of the students in the general dimension of spiritual well-being is not satisfactory. The results also show that the mean score of academic achievement of male students is more than female. Also, the mean score of spiritual well-being of female students is more than male. But, totally, the spiritual well-being score of female and male students is less than mean. Also, there is a significant and positive relation between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students (male and female). On the other hand, there is a significant and positive relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of economic and management and students of human science. But there is no significant relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement of students of engineering and basic sciences students and students of art and architecture.

Ellison (1983, as cited in Fisher, 2002) defined spiritual well-being as the confirmation of individual's life in relationship with the Supreme Being, self, society and the environment that nurtured it that. He believes that spiritual well-being which is a religious component is a symptom associated with a higher power, namely, the Supreme Being. Existential well-being is a psychological - social component and demonstrates individual's feeling about this fact that who is he, what does he do and why and where does he belong. Since human acts as an integrated system, these two dimensions while being separated, interact and overlap with each other, and therefore, the sense of spiritual health, satisfaction and purposefulness arise. Different research findings in countries with religious backgrounds indicate that in all cultures, being religious has positive impact on alignment with family and is associated with greater satisfaction with life. This communication is stronger in cultures that the role of religion is more highlighted compared with cultures that is less important (Sabatir et al., 2004).

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